

Over the past several months, the Western Wayne Auto Theft Unit (WWATU) and other auto theft task forces have been investigating a major auto theft ring. The suspects would produce forged SOS documents at auto dealerships, get keys cut, then steal the vehicle, retag it, and sell it. Most of the vehicles stolen were advertised in the Tradin' Times. The suspect would call the owner of the vehicle, get the address and the VIN number of the car, and then get a key cut for the vehicle. One of the vehicles stolen was a DEA agent's personal vehicle. The vehicle was parked in his garage; however, they broke into the agent's other car, moved it out of the way, and used the garage door opener to get inside the garage.

WWATU developed a suspect who was getting keys cut at a dealership in Dearborn and put a tracker on a vehicle slated to be stolen out of Grosse Pointe. The vehicle was stolen and eventually taken to Inkster, where a search warrant was executed. Five stolen cars were recovered, with three of them already retagged. Numerous keys for other stolen cars were recovered, along with titles, false ID, tools, and a computer.

The subject arrested had five felony warrants for his arrest, including one from WWATU. This suspect had keys made for over 25 cars that were stolen and retagged, and that was only from one dealership. He was giving the vehicles to someone who was shipping them overseas. WWATU was assisted by the Downriver Auto Theft Team (DRATT) and the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB).